



Parris N. Glendening
Governor

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman

**Maryland Higher Education Commission
Community College Capital Grant Program**

Karen R. Johnson
Secretary of Higher Education

Response to the Department of Legislative Services' Recommendation

The Commission does not accept the analyst's recommendation to defer \$25.9 million in the Community College Capital Grant program and \$477,000 in the Takoma Park Expansion project for Montgomery College.

In September 2000, the House and Senate budget committees expressed concern that support for the Community College Capital Grant program has not kept pace with enrollment growth. The Committees requested that the Commission work with Department of Budget and Management and the Department of General Services to evaluate the level of community college grant requests to determine an appropriate future level of funding based on the needs of the community colleges. The Commission assessed both the current and future needs, examined enrollment projections, space and infrastructure needs, examined community colleges' 10 year facilities master plans and their five-year Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) and reviewed historical data to determine a reasonable level of funding for the community colleges. The Joint Chair's Report recommended a five-year funding level of \$195 million. The Governor's proposal of \$182.8 million over a five-year period reflects this higher commitment level to the Community College Capital Grant program.

Without adequate State funding, the unmet needs of the community colleges will continue to increase. Currently, the community colleges educate half of all undergraduates. Last fall, enrollment at the community colleges grew by 6 percent and the colleges were responsible for 42 percent of the total statewide higher education enrollment increase. The Commission anticipates a 19 percent overall increase in full-time equivalent students and a 20 percent increase in full-time day equivalent students by Fall 2010. These projected increases are expected to coincide with an anticipated surge in the number of new full-time students at community colleges. This surge will be fueled by a large increase in the number of new high school graduates due to the 'baby boom echo'. In addition, several University System of Maryland campuses have been following an enrollment management policy that limits the admission of full-time undergraduates for the purpose of increasing the quality of entering students. The Commission believes that these factors will affect the community colleges and have a significant impact on space needs. Additional facilities at our community colleges will be necessary to accommodate this growth.